THE SIDEWALK SCHOLAR: ACADEMIA IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Brenda C. Lucas

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ACCEPTANCE PAGE

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MLS Committee:

Rebecca Torstrick

Rebecca Torstrick

Mahesh Ananth

Mahesh Ananth

April Lidinsky

Date of Oral Examination:

For Freedom Jones: May all of your tears be ones of joy.

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Introduction: The Responsibility of Guardianship and Virtuous Communities

The premise of this writing lies within the proposal that community leaders and activists should transition scholarship from the theoretically exclusive ivory towers where it is customarily perched onto pathways most accessible to the public audience within communities. Our foundation's name, "The Sidewalk Scholar" signifies a metaphoric avenue where none are barred and upon which all may learn, teach and travel as frequently as desired.

The Sidewalk Scholar was established in 2009 as a community-based literacy program aimed at honing students' interpretive ability through the use of interactive pedagogy. The reasoning behind the program's establishment is really very simple: it was our responsibility to do so. Our belief that we who possess any valuable resources should share with our kith and kin grounds our commitment to serve our community(s). Serving others assists leaders in the acquisition of wisdom by developing the complex skill of leading through sharing. Wisdom in leadership is achieved through a realization that the achievement of the collective supersedes the achievement of the individual. Our success as leaders is measured through our ability to not only uplift ourselves but also many others in the process.

From an Aristotelian perspective, leaders achieve true wisdom when the full circuit of knowledge through an entire life is complete. Babies begin on teetering limbs and may survive to advanced age to ambulate on the same teetering limbs as elderly adults. We are taught and we learn and must in turn, teach others. True leaders, those who have nearly completed life's circuit, must teach in order to complete their own self development. When this occurs, both teacher and learner are fulfilled.

Some critics question whether "classrooms of community" can promote anything beyond the most rudimentary learning content, particularly when such programs are housed within communities of color and are comprised of economically underserved individuals. These detractors may employ a line of reasoning that could be extrapolated from Aristotelian theory:

> …in order to listen appropriately to discussion about what is fine and just, i.e. about the objects of political expertise in general, one must have been well brought up. For the starting point is that it is so, and if this were sufficiently clear to us – well, in that case there will be no need to know in addition why. But such a person either has the relevant first principles, or might easily grasp them.[1]

Aristotle believed that only those who are raised in families and or environments of privilege, whether through economic or cultural means, have the capacity to achieve success in life since they are more likely to have had exposure to the finer things in life.

From this we could deduce that those who arise from economically challenged environments and are considered members of racial / ethnic minorities may be barred from an ability to comprehend what is to be considered "fine" or to be able to discern that which was not a part of their habitus. Habituation aside, for the less advantaged this type of assumption limits intellectual growth only to rote methods of learning. While a topical reading of Aristotle's theory might suggest that community learning programs will fail, I will argue that an extrapolation of his discourse may provide a means for success.

My premise that grassroots community-based programs are an element paramount for the promotion of a good civil society means that intellectual growth through the

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[1] Broadie, S., Rowe, C. (2002). Aristotle nicomachean ethics: Translation, introduction, and commentary. NE I.4-1095b4-b8. New York, NY. Oxford University Press.

initiation of critical reasoning skills is not only essential to civic welfare but may be stimulated and habituated through the efforts of community activists and leaders.

The promotion of a good civil society through the efforts and models provided by hands-on community activists and leaders is more than just a classical theory exemplar; the practicality of this concept continues to the present day. The need for such action increases with decreases in interpersonal community relationships (lessened communal activities), high unemployment, and other economic destabilizing factors, all of which contribute to heightened crime rates.

The Sidewalk Scholar engages in a process of "ripping" virtue ethics. This process involves taking Aristotle's classical theory and other canonical works and re-packaging them into new interpretive formats. The interpretive formats take contemporary situations into account and allow for a view of ethics through a more modern conceptual lens. The ripping process allows individuals within diverse environments that may lack access to classical works to better understand the inherent, ethical messages through their native perspectives. A better comprehension of the ethical messages enables an application of the lessons to their lives in a manner that is more conducive to their circumstances.

The need for ethics as a practicable concept is made necessary by decreases in interpersonal community relationships. As neighbors and some families cease to interact with one another in ways that are conducive to the progression of the overall good will of the collective, the need for further development of ethical principles necessary to support civic stability increases.

Decreases in funding for neighborhood community centers, after school programs and declines in small community-based businesses such as barber and beauty shops and grocery stores have led to the minimizing of localized places where neighbors are likely to meet regularly and interact with one another. Employment and the struggle for economic survival in a downturn economy cause many family members to disconnect from one another in order to garner revenue from sources distant from their neighborhoods and relatives. As a result of these divisive factors, few opportunities remain for communal interaction. While this dilemma is present within many contemporary communities, it is of particular concern within communities of color. Where communities that possess greater funding may house more educational and personal support services such as individual and/or family counseling programs, many communities of color lack funding for programs that embrace individual development or that promote community enhancement.

For communities of color, these circumstances have existed throughout their history. An exception to the absence of community support services has historically been churches. In the Black community specifically, churches often served as everything from school houses to family and community crisis centers. The influence of the church upon American inner city, minority populations dates back to the Revolutionary period. Free Blacks in the North established churches as conduits for the social infrastructure denied to them by the larger society. [2]

Churches grew and thrived within inner city communities in the centuries following the Revolutionary and Civil wars, offering moral grounding and leadership in

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[2] Berlin, Ira. Many Thousands Gone: (1998). *The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America.* Cambridge, MA. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press (pp 251)

nearly every aspect of life for minority residents. Marriages were established, families stabilized, education encouraged and crimes deterred. Cohesion within the communities was greater as a result of communal participation in worship.

More recently however, Black Americans have begun to distance themselves from the church. A 2009 Wall Street Journal article featured a study which indicated the number of Americans stating they had no religion at 15%. Attendance at houses of worship was stated to be at the lowest level in over 30 years with only 25% of young adults attending services regularly.[3]

With church attendance in decline and family structures in transition, moral development remains a necessity for civil society to survive. Inner city neighborhoods, in spite of their turmoil and strife, remain a part of humanity. So, in light of this urban decline, how are "moral sensibilities" to be cultivated? One answer is to draw upon the insights of Aristotle: Excellence of character is achieved through our interaction with others.

> …so it does not make a small difference whether people are habituated to behave in one way or in another way from childhood on, but a very great one; or rather, it makes all the difference in the world. (N.E. 1103 b, 23)

A lack of conduits for communal interaction such as close knit families or the promotion of communal mores through participation in community-based religious organizations, results in lessened opportunities for the habituation of positive behavior.

Our manner of conducting ourselves must be habituated if good moral virtues are to result. This habituation can be garnered through grassroots community-based programs. These programs can help to emphasize the positive refinement of dispositions

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[3] Wilcox, W. "God Will Provide—Unless the Government Gets There First." *The Wall Street Journal.* March 13, 2009. May be found at: http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123690880933515111.html

and may cause individuals to behave in positive ways. A large degree of active community engagement and support may habituate individuals toward excellence.

In what can be viewed as an update of Aristotle's insights about moral training, Paul Gomberg describes a consequence of positive, community engagement:

> We develop an identity, a sense of self, in community with others. The sense of self is defined largely through norms that we learn from others, what it means to be a good person. We want to think well of ourselves, but to do so we must conform to our own understanding of what a good person is and does. We have situated and relational identities: a teacher, a father or mother, a hard worker, a Christian, an anti-racist…Each identity is defined through norms of behavior that we esteem and disesteem…there are norms that define quite generally what a good person does and does not do…All these identities – from the general one of being a good person to the more particular ones, for example being American or an internationalist – are socially learned…conformity with norms implicit in an identity and the esteem of like-minded others are central to a positive view of ourselves.[4]

Generally speaking, to engage with one's community is to glean norms from those who are near to us. Our adaptations of ways to live and learn cause us not only to gain the respect of our fellow community dwellers, but they also imbue us, as Gomberg stresses, with self esteem that may enable positive behavior that facilitates good community growth and development.

Positive relationships between community members may initiate decreases in high crime rates. Familiarity with and good will among neighbors may ground support for locally owned business. While Gomberg argues that the opportunity for wealth is not unlimited, the opportunity for knowledge acquisition through community-based programs may well be limitless. The upshot here is that the overall benefits to communities can be far reaching.

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[4] Gomberg, P. (2007). How to make opportunity equal: race and contributive justice. ppg. 57. Malden, MA. Blackwell Publishing.

Reminiscent of concepts inherent in Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*, the guardians, in the form of community leaders and activists, have a responsibility to parlay the light of knowledge to those left to dwell in the depths of darkness. When we perceive intellectual and cultural enhancement in the sense of collective versus individual development, the focus widens in a fraternal sense. Psychologist Barbara Jensen cites Sennet and Cobb's description of outcomes of individual (versus collective) development,

> They found that children forced to choose between developing their individual abilities and being part of their peer groups: being a teacher's "pet" meant they learned lots of school skills, but they were ignored or ridiculed by the other children. They called this dynamic "fraternity versus ability". I call it "belonging versus becoming".[5]

Within the sphere of community-based learning programs, developing the group may be more inclusive and result in a *collective* belonging and becoming, as suggested by Sennet and Cobb above. Rather than focusing on individual achievement, causing angst among those who may fall short in individualized scenarios, the focus is centered on team efforts. A focus on collective achievement counters the isolation of individuals and causes all to experience a sense of group attachment, an important component for community development.

When community leaders take on the responsibility to teach among their own, leaders and lay persons develop together and the populace becomes more cohesive. Divisive factors such as crime are minimized through members' increased familiarity with one another, communal knowledge enhancement, and the model of care and concern displayed through leaders' and activist's actions. Discordant themes within communities are eased through the practical application of virtuous behaviors and with the

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[5] Jensen, B. (2012). Reading classes: On culture and classism in America. ppg. 54. Ithaca, NY. Cornell University.

development of relationships that can result through engagement in community-based learning programs.

Ideas concerning ethics-based programs are not a new concept. Aristotle's implied methodology of habituation represents a classical model for training toward virtuous conduct. More contemporary, comprehensive, programs such as the grassroots "Virtues Project" augment parents and teachers' efforts to assist in virtue development among children. Programs such as this may provide an application of Aristotelian habituation of virtue through the insertion of a "virtue word" for each week of the year coupled with the encouragement of its use and actions that correspond to its meaning. Rosalind Hursthouse, a neo-Aristotelian, writes of the benefits of such programs for children:

> So, from very early days, there is the application of the relevant words to a variety of imagined as well as real instances, and the beginning of reflection, a detailed picture of how the training is bound up with thought and talk, where the talk centers around the use of virtue words in specific circumstances. All of this is consistent with, but provides a much-needed supplement to, philosophers' reflections; it provides a detailed answer to the question: "How do we begin to give children the that? [6]

In this sense, teachers, parents, community leaders and activists are able to help children develop virtuous traits through teaching them, enacting them and encouraging children to exercise critical reasoning regarding virtuous acts. The *that* discussed here, how children are able to discern what actions *are* noble and just in certain instances, is a direct consequence of the child's ability to reason critically. When children witness adults whom they trust and respect making certain choices over others, the children begin to develop a sense of what are right or wrong choices based on the actions of adults. The

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[6] Hursthouse, R. (2006). *The central doctrine of the mean.* ppg 112-113. Malden, MA. Blackwell Publishing.

encouragement or discouragement by adults of children's behavior may guide children's decision-making processes.

While specific objectives and focuses of grassroots programs may vary, all have the capacity to achieve far-reaching success. The Sidewalk Scholar's decision to institute programs which promote literacy is just one of many prospective avenues area activists and leaders may choose to implement that could enhance their communities. Our choice to work on literacy concerns is, in part, underpinned by the results of professional research, such as a 2011 College Board study. These data illustrate a decline in SAT scores over the past decade. While the study shows that math scores have remained steady, scores which highlight critical reasoning and writing capability have declined. [7]

In the next four sections of this paper I will walk the reader through relevancy scholarly works that grounded the establishment of our program. Section I discusses community changes that cause a need for such programs. Section II I address the mutual benefits of community based programs which can be obtained by both program facilitators and participants. In Section III the discourse covers the need for intercommunity voice as a means of engaging the experiences of the community. Section IV lays out the practical questions to be answered in the construction of a community based program. Finally, I end with the story of The Sidewalk Scholar in my own words.

Section I: Causes of Community Need:
Part A-Violence as a socioeconomic symptom?

While there may be many factors that drive the need for the implementation of programs to develop greater community interrelationships, in the interest of brevity this section focuses on two causes of community concerns particularly within, but not entirely

[7] http://professional.collegeboard.com/profdownload/cbs-2009-Graph-10_Mean-SAT-Scores-2009-College-Bound-Seniors-Race-Ethnicity.pdf

exclusive among minority populations. Part A raises questions concerning whether incidences of violence are symptoms of socioeconomic (consumerist driven) factors or if such acts result from an absence of guidance as close interpersonal relationships and community support resources decrease. Part B examines whether the impact of electronic communications media on interpersonal relationships is a negative one or if increases in their usage hold the prospect to close distances in relationships.

As was previously discussed, the need for community-based programs increases as high unemployment and other economic destabilizing factors contribute to heightened crime rates. The desires to enjoy good civic relations aside, safety within and outside of individual communities is jeopardized by violence that may result as a consequence of the lack of programs designed to counter the underlying issues of dissent. Violence may also result from consumerist driven desires among those deprived of the means to possess highly touted items such as cell phones, etc. The under privileged may subsequently victimize others in order to obtain those items, something Tocqueville remarked on:

> In America I never met a citizen too poor to cast a glance of hope and envy toward the pleasures of the rich or whose imagination did not snatch in anticipation good things that fate obstinately refused to him. [8]

Society viewed through a Hobbesian perspective, is believed to be inherently violent by nature. History, fraught with examples of "man on man" violence, bears out more chaotic symptoms of the human psyche; the resultant violent behaviors may possess any number of psychologically driven roots. In addition to violence motivated through the quest for material goods, hatred and/or envy of and/or the desire to eradicate "others" has spurred violence since the Holy Roman Empire waged war against perceived dissenters at the behest of their Christian leaders. Further, the imposition of slavery

[8] De Tocqueville. A. "Democracy in America". Chapter 10

against Africans and many other races throughout time, the lynching of Blacks in the American south, and the more recent brutal mob activity mentioned below are all incidences that share similar motivations. In short, violence within societies may occur for many reasons, economic or otherwise.

Although instigators of the aforementioned brutalities may vary, a common element of these examples is violent activity being carried out through the collective acts of "mobs" or "crowds". While not discussing at length the psychological aspects of mob violence, I do endeavor to provide a fundamental grounding of factors which surround such activity in an effort to parlay a deeper understanding of the possible motives of the actors involved. This discussion is salient to my topic as the elements of mob violence are present within the communities where our programs are housed. Violent, mob action is common within communities we serve. Paul Gilje (1996) analyzes mob violence from his historical perspective on the behavior:

> Riotous crowds do not act merely on impulse and are not fickle. There is a reason behind the actions of the rioters, no matter how violent those actions may be. This rationality has two major components. First, the mob's tumultuous behavior is directly connected to grievances of those involved in the riot. A tumultuous crowd does not ordinarily engage in wanton destruction of persons and property. Instead they seize upon some object or objects that represent the forces that propelled them into the riot originally. [9]

In author Alex Alvarez' (2008) description, an aggressive mob may target property or people, and exhibits emotionally charged violence which is usually short lived. Tocqueville believed that deviance was the result of social conditions fueled by poverty

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[9] Paul A. Gilje, *Rioting in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996) Cited in: Alvarez, A., Bachman, R. (2008). Violence: The enduring problem. Thousand Oaks, CA. SAGE Publications.

and inequality.[10] Taken together, Tocqueville's, Gilje's and Alvarez' estimations based on classical and contemporary political theories and actions intertwine to explain negative symptoms of human behavior when coupled with current economic tensions. [11]

Recent reports of violence enacted by teens in Philadelphia, Ohio, Chicago and beyond, have spotlighted emotionally charged acts which may have been in part, fueled by poverty and inequality. As a 2010 report by the U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee[12] lists minority youth unemployment figures at 34.9% for Black high school graduates not enrolled in school. Swarms, comprised of mostly minority youth, labeled "flash mobs" have taken to the streets and retail establishments where they systematically victimize commuters, shoppers and stores. The swarms rob their victims of high dollar items in seemingly coordinated attacks which are often vicious and result in severe harm to persons as well as in high dollar losses to retailers. An October 2011 *Parade* magazine article distinguishes the difference between "friendly" flash mobs and feared, "violent," ones:

> … hundreds of pranksters riding New York City subways in their undies to 2,000 Washingtonians massing for a snowball fight, …spontaneous get-togethers known as flash mobs have been popping up everywhere since their first sightings in 2003... Lately, though, flash mobs have taken on a nastier edge. They were blamed for inciting this summer's riots in London, and in Philadelphia, flash-mob gatherings, including one that trashed a Macy's, prompted Mayor Michael Nutter to impose a 9 p.m. weekend curfew for minors in parts of the city. [13]

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[10] De Tocqueville. A. "Democracy in America". Chapter 10

[11] Ibid . Also See Tocqueville's *On the Penitentiary System in the United States and its Application in France*

[12] Maloney, C. Representative. (2010). Understanding the economy: Unemployment among young workers. U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee. May be accessed at: http://jec.senate.gov/public/?a=Files.Serve&File_id=adaef80b-d1f3-479c-97e7-727f4c0d9ce6

[13] Daly, Steve. (October 16, 2011). "Flash Mobs: Fun to Frightening". Intelligence Report. Parade Magazine. May be accessed at: http://www.parade.com/news/intelligence-report/2011/10/16-flash-mobs.html

Similar, more detailed, reports of teen flash mobs have been filed by the Chicago Tribune and The Washington Times. [14] The articles outline the manner in which groups, comprised of between 10 to as many as 20 teens, convene in upscale establishments and fan out, waiting for a predetermined electronically transmitted signal. Once given, the youths proceed to snatch and grab expensive items and run out of stores simultaneously. Store security personnel have been overwhelmed by the volume of the shoplifters as well as by the speed at which the shoplifting occurs. In attacks against individuals, groups of teens converge like locusts upon their victims; knocking them to the ground using their fists or bats or other weapons, kicking, beating and robbing them of their valuables including money, clothing and/or electronic items.

Sociologist Robert Crutchfield contends that there is a link between economic circumstances of groups, specifically minorities, and increased levels of violence. Crutchfield, Matsueda, and Drakulich write:

> …social disorganization theory suggests that neighborhoods with high concentrations of racial and ethnic minorities may have high rates of violence in part because of low socioeconomic status, resulting from joblessness and low-quality jobs, which contribute to community disorganization, loss of control over youth, and high rates of crime and violence. [15]

Those "uncontrolled" youth now appear to be traveling outside of their neighborhoods in search of prey, expanding the geographic area of violent incidences to regions unfamiliar and unequipped to deal with the intensity of these aggressive phenomena. Recent,

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[14] See Gorner, J. Grimm, A. (June 4, 2011). "Teen mobs suspected in downtown assaults". The Chicago Tribune. May be accessed at: http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/chibrknews-northwestern-chicago-police- warn-about-mob-action-attacks-20110604,0,7878457.story?page=1 and Boyer, D. (August 8, 2011). "Philadelphia Mayor talks tough to Black teenagers after "flash mobs". The Washington Times. May be accessed at: http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/aug/8/mayor-talks-tough-to-black-teens-after- flash-mobs/?page=all

[15] Crutchfield, Robert D., Matsueda, Ross L., and Drakulich, Kevin. "Race, Labor Markets, and Neighborhood Violence" ppg 2. May be accessed at: http://faculty.washington.edu/matsueda/SNCP%20web%20files/race_labor_markets_edited.pdf

marked, increases in lower income youth and minority youth unemployment figures may be cohesively tied to a rise in the synchronized attacks against more privileged persons and/or retail establishments. Other more psychologically pervasive factors may also be contributory.

An analysis of marketing strategies that target youth and minorities as factors contributing to theft crimes underwritten by psychological desires to "attain the unattainable" may also be in order. Juliet Schor's (2004) work chronicles youth television and media usage. Schor's study cites the amount of daily media exposure and media use by children ages 8-13 at 6 hours and 47 minutes. With the addition of other types of media, Schor argues that daily media usage rates double. The author adds:

> In households with lower incomes, there is more television watching, especially among younger children. And in households where parents have lower educational levels, viewing times are higher, especially among younger children. [16]

Schor's study sheds light on the ways in which advertisers target youth audiences; applying pressure on youth to consume certain products. Moreover, this marketing is specified further to capture youth markets along racial/ethnic lines. Schor argues that the images promoted by marketers include what constitutes "cool"; "Living modestly means living like a loser." Cool in the form of Nike, Tag watches, and Tommy Hilfiger costs money. Many youth, particularly minorities, are torn between a moneyed, media vision of life and the reality of a penniless existence. [17]

As market media images drive feelings of inadequacy which cause many to become "constant consumers," questions arise as to whether or not one's sense of identity

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[16] Schor, J. (2004). Born to buy. Pgs. 33-34. New York, NY. Simon and Schuster.
[17] Ibid pgs. 47-51

has been indelibly yoked to what one may buy. Another concern is whether or not one's sense of belonging which accompanies the acquisition of material goods is lost when one lacks the means to consume. While crime, and subsequently, violent flash mobs may result from high unemployment and consumerist influences, other factors, such as the lack of close interpersonal relationships also contribute to negative youth behavior. Efforts to provide more inclusive, alternative images to those presented within market media may result in a heightened sense of belonging.

Community-based organizations may use social media to emphasize communally held values, promoting ethical over material gains. Rather than messages sent to convey coordinated attacks, technology can be employed to extend daily correspondence regarding positive community-based activities. While much has been written concerning the effects of electronic media on interpersonal relationships, questions remain as to whether the benefits of media usage in the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships outweigh the negative consequences that may result.

An answer to the widening gaps in close relationships, and the violence that occurs as a result of consumerist pressures may be addressed by the habituation of counter-values. Community leaders, through the imposition of community based programs may help to offset negative feelings and behaviors among youths and others.

Causes of Community Need: Part B
The impact of electronic media

Eight year old Cara had her first piano recital today. She'd been very excited about it for weeks; practicing nearly every day after school and on weekends. Cara played very well today; when she finished her piece she told her mother: "…I was so nervous; my stomach was all tied up in knots…" Her mother replied, "I'm proud of you

sweetie." Cara looked around at the throngs of other children and parents in the auditorium, smiling at one another and hugging each other. She looked back down at her cell phone screen. Her mother said, "I'll see it all on You Tube later…Love U." Cara slumped sullenly in a chair to wait for her ride.

While many circumstances might contribute to a parents' inability to participate actively in their children's lives, cell phones and the internet may appear to provide a viable alternative of minimal contact at best. Still, the rise in the use of electronic communications devices (ECDs) has caused a negative shift in the communication of values within society. Studies show that the rise in ECD usage is usurping the quality of human-to-human interaction by negatively reshaping family communications dynamics and is having a less than positive impact on overall socialization. According to a recent Scandinavian report, negative impacts are further exacerbated if users are among the working class or poor. Findings point to a need for early education of children and re-education of many adults regarding more ethical and effective usage of ECDs as a means to counteract negative effects. [18]

Inherent within the technical capabilities of electronic media is the ability for one to be able to access material that may not be available through traditional educational programs. While online learning programs such as the Khan Academy offer free subject matter that may be missing from school programs as a result of budget cuts, they lack the elements of direct human to human interaction so necessary for child development. In

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[18] Koivusilta, L. K., Lintonen, T.P., Rimpela, A.H. (2007) Orientations in adolescent use of information and communication technology: A digital divide by sociodemographic background, educational career, and health. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health,* 35, 95-103.

this section I want to examine how electronic media connects to a decline in the quality of interpersonal relationships within a community.

While applications such as text messaging allow for almost instant interaction between relatives across town or across the country, text messaging, when utilized as a deliberate substitute for face-to-face interaction, usurps the quality of human-to-human interaction. This is because virtual methods of communication such as text messaging, particularly popular among young people, lack human-to- human spatial proximity and are incapable of transferring meaning inherent in nonverbal forms of communication. Communication consists of more than mere words; symbols are often attached to language which convey meaning and impart significance to expression. Galvin and Brommel (1982) state:

> Communication may be viewed as a symbolic, transactional process, or to put it more simply, as the process of creating and sharing meanings. By saying that communication is symbolic, we mean that symbols are employed to transmit messages. Verbal behavior or words are the most commonly used symbols but the whole range of nonverbal behavior including facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, movement, body posture, appearance, and spatial distance may be used symbolically. [19]

Cara wanted a hug.

Nonverbal behavior among families may include real smiles and hugs and nuanced physical actions which express encouragement or even disappointment, important elements for the development of patterns of communication inherent within the nature of family dynamics. It is often within this family dynamic that the transmission of fundamental cultural values takes place. Communication, particularly in the formative

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[19] Galvin, K. M., Brommel, B. J. (1982). Family communication: Cohesion and change. Glenview, IL Scott, Foresman And Company.

years unaccompanied by nonverbal behaviors, may leave behind valuable transactional symbols and, more importantly, meaningful expressions of societal values.

Jane Lanigan (2009) discusses the impact that information and communication technologies have on family life in her research. While mobile technology may increase frequency of communication, Lanigan cites studies that note a reduction in content and context of those communications. Further, Lanigan states,

> Family members can avoid family interactions by engaging with the multimedia functions on their cell phones…pervasive accessibility can become problematic. Interactive family communication is reduced if members use cell phones to connect with outsiders such as work or friends rather than the family members in their presence.[20]

There is a negative impact on the family communication dynamic through individualized ECD usage which can be wielded as tools that convey nonverbal "barrier signals" from one family member to another.

While individualized activity and more exclusive behaviors such as video gaming and virtual lifestyles are espoused by some childhood experts as methods to promote more independent traits in children, what exists in animated worlds to prepare them for the reality of human interaction? The development of socialization capabilities in children is pivotal for the survival of society. Communication, through both verbal and nonverbal forms as it is developed within the family as a nucleus for society, is our primary capability to engage *within* that society and further, helps us to *achieve* within society. A further question to consider: what is the compounded impact for families already experiencing lessened communication with the addition of heightened ECD usage?

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[20] Lanigan, J.D. (2009). A sociotechnological model for family research and intervention: How information and communication technologies affect family life. *Marriage & Family Review,* 45: 6, 587-609.

Annette Lareau (2003) discusses the value of language and the ability to communicate effectively as a socioeconomically divisive element. Lareau illustrates how the distinctions between language usage among middle class and working poor families have a direct effect upon child development from an educational standpoint and indirectly upon their occupational and social status. Her study shows that middle class families communicate more directly and comprehensively overall within their families, thereby extending to middle class children a more extensive vocabulary along with corresponding nonverbal skills such as eye contact. Children from working poor families, where language is used in a more functional sense, often possess a smaller vocabulary as a result:

> …since linguistic interaction often builds vocabulary and other important reading skills, there was an unequal educational benefit for children from the different approaches to language in the home. Working-class and poor children also gained less experience in negotiating with adults, skills that might be useful in institutional encounters in their future. [21]

Families who engage in increased person-to-person communication are more likely to see benefits arise for them from society at large, versus families who experience less direct person-to-person communication. How should we then analyze this hypothesis when extrapolated within an increased arena of usage of ECDs? In order to determine whether or not usage of ECDs may mitigate or exacerbate this dilemma of socioeconomic status, we must examine *how* different segments of society utilize devices.

Research conducted in Finland, which coincides with Lareau's study, exemplifies how sociodemographic background plays a role in the ways adolescents utilize communication technology. A study featured in the *Scandinavian Journal of Public*

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[21] Lareau, A. (2003). Unequal Childhoods: Class, race and family life. 107 University of California Press.

Health, focused on interactive communication technologies (ICT, including computers, the Internet, mobile phones and digital games) and explored how ICTs impact the health and welfare of adolescents. Their representative sampling of 7,292, 12 to 18 year olds concluded that,

> A digital divide among adolescents was observed in this study. Adolescents with better health, higher socioeconomic background, and educational career with better social prospects in adulthood more often exploited ICT forms that improved their informational utilization skills, whereas entertainment use of ICT accumulated at the opposite end of the spectrum.[22]

While describing the ICT as a source for health related information and skills and as a fount to influence cognitive and social development for adolescents, the Finland study lists the negative effects as: "...increases in aggressive behavior encouraged by violent games, game or Internet addiction, and violation of interpersonal relationships with related mental health problems..." [23]As was the case with language and communication in the Lareau study, according to this research, poor, working class children fare worse in ECD usage. Communication via mobile means outside of the family nucleus has grown exponentially in recent years. The aforementioned study listed youth along the lower socio-demographic strata as the highest users of mobile phones. From these findings, taken together with the results of the Lareau study, we may ironically infer that individuals from lower income families with less communications

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[22] Koivusilta, L. K., Lintonen, T.P., Rimpela, A.H. (2007). Orientations in adolescent use of information and communication technology: A digital divide by sociodemographic background, educational career, and health. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, 35, 95-103.

[23] Ibid.

skills communicate the most via ECDs and consequently, the negative impact of usage is further exacerbated among this group. [24] In her study, Jane Lanigan noted:

> Successful families used the information capability of the technology to enhance family time by learning about community activities and by planning vacations and other time together…These families did not use computer technology in isolation but often with other family members. The communication capability helped maintain frequent and positive contact between members that enhanced bonds. [25]

Children and adults in the Lanigan study discovered ways to apply the use of one type of ECD to affect cohesion through family-centered activities such as family web sites.

Another benefit that may be gleaned from usage of electronic communications devices or more specifically, the internet, rests in the ability to obtain educational assistance through courses offered online. While online courses may not completely replace human-to-human interaction within educational programs (particularly for those lacking rudimentary educational skill sets), the internet has the capacity to fill voids designed by substandard curriculums in ill-funded school systems as well as fulfilling the scholastic aims of those who are denied access to traditional learning programs. Online sites such as the Khan Academy offer free lessons that cover a wide range of subjects which include math, science, the humanities and even a number of standardized test preparation videos. [26]

Online education aside, contemporary circumstances that minimize human / emotional ties necessitates the need to expand the "We" of the primary family group dynamic to interpersonal relationships that include the larger village / community. Potential community "guardians" eligible for these positions include extended family

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[24] Ibid.
[25] Lanigan, J.D.
[26] www.khanacademy.org

members as well as resident members interested in community enhancement and others. These guardians may possess specific constructive knowledge and expertise which may be shared. While working class families specifically have major survival concerns that require extra time, effort and attention, community leaders and activists may be able to fulfill a degree of children's developmental needs where voids are created by busy parents.

Section II

Benefit to All: Accessing What is Fine and Just

A listing of qualifications for potential community guardians should look less like a formal resume and more like a list of neighborhood service awards. In a loose Platonist sense, while those who have risen from depth to heights within a community are "...better able to share in both types of life."[27] More contemporary guardians / activists and community leaders are compelled by no higher authority than that of a sense of obligation and responsibility to their fellow residents and to their communities.

Many prospective activists and leaders, who have realized the benefits of educational and economic opportunities, flee from the very neighborhoods that hold fundamental factors of their upward mobility, places which embody their character, determination and self confidence. The cracked and crumbling infrastructure that housed their individual development and subsequently facilitated their success now receives the contempt of their retreating backs.

William Wilson and Richard Taub cite Albert Hirschman's economic-based theory that lists exit, voice and loyalty as components of this phenomenon,

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[27] Grube, G.M.A. (1992). Plato republic. ppg. 192. (Bk VII 520 b-c). Indianapolis, IN. Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.

> When general conditions in a neighborhood deteriorate…those who value most highly neighborhood qualities such as safety, cleanliness, good schools and so forth will be the first to move out; they will search for housing in somewhat more expensive neighborhoods or in the suburbs and will be lost to the citizens' groups and community action programs that would attempt to stem and reverse the tide of deterioration.[28]

While Wilson and Taub utilize the overall components of Hirschman's theory to illustrate reasons for ethnic change within neighborhoods, his theory also holds significance when attempting to comprehend inter-ethnic changes in the context of shifts in the economic circumstances of individuals.

Interestingly, the two remaining components of this theory--voice and loyalty--are also central to an understanding of how the concepts may be applied as counter measures to inter-ethnic flight:

> The more willing people are to try to exercise voice – that is, to change, correct, or prevent a particular situation – the less likely they are to exit…Loyalty becomes particularly important when it reduces the likelihood that the residents most concerned about neighborhood quality will…depart. Such residents tend to be those with superior social resources and more options; they are also likely to be influential.[29]

These assertions provide motivations for those with resources to move away to remain and may also facilitate the return of those who have absconded.

Reasons for flourishing members of a community to remain within or return to a blighted neighborhood should be centered on principled objectives. In lieu of formulating strategies to profiteer from gentrification initiatives, those who stay within or return to their home communities should adopt more benevolent agendas which involve the enhancement of the community and its members. The personification of humility enables

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[28] Wilson, W. J., Taub, R. (2006). There goes the neighborhood. ppg. 8. New York, NY. Alfred A. Knopf.
[29] Ibid. ppg. 7, 9.

activists and community leaders to continue to thrive and to grow as a result of their own giving spirits.

In *Black on the Block*, Mary Pattillo (2007) chronicles circumstances in Black neighborhoods in Chicago. Specifically she discusses what she terms "re-neighboring" of the North Kenwood-Oakland area. What is significant and relevant to discourse about who should lead community-based literacy-type programs is that Pattillo discusses re-neighboring in the context of upwardly resourced individuals or individuals who possess economic resources staying within or returning to communities that they could recognize as a "home" community and into communities where they share characteristics such as race with the current residents.

Pattillo describes this process of the "Black Bourgeoisie" moving into or back to the neighborhood of North Kenwood-Oakland in Chicago,

> Or moving back, since the first group of African Americans to move into the neighborhood in the 1940s and 1950s were also Black people of some means. Unlike the first Black middle class settlers who were racial pioneers in an all-white neighborhood, the current generation of Black Bourgeoisie newcomers are class pioneers in a low income neighborhood. To use the slogan of one developer, they are "re-neighboring" North Kenwood-Oakland, an ironic marketing ploy given the fact that the place already had neighbors in it. [30]

Despite these apparent gentrifying motives, the residents already in place, (we will term them "primary residents" for clarity's sake), rather than expressing negative sentiments, appear to view the change with a more positive outlook.

The appearance of Black "gentrifiers" versus White ones, illicits a different response than one may expect. Pattillo's interview with one such resident, demonstrates,

> When I met George Wade, he was unemployed and having difficulty finding work due to chronic health problems. He had moved from

[30] Pattillo, ppg. 83

> apartment to apartment in the neighborhood, once because the house he was living in was sold to someone who planned to convert it back into a single-family home. That experience made him acutely aware of the changes going on around him. The plan, as he saw it, was to "balance the budget. We tryin' to make the poor live with the rich…The whole idea is to make the neighborhood comfortable. That's what all this is about. To make the whole neighborhood comfortable." Wade liked the idea of mixing rich and poor, and even mixing black and white…He told me, "Like me, I don't think of myself as poor, poor, poor. I see myself as a little bit above poor.[31]

Mr. Wade could have been assumed to have had less than amiable feelings toward the new additions / re-additions to the neighborhood in terms of their economic status but instead, he perceived the change as a positive one for the neighborhood and maybe indirectly for himself. For Wade, the addition of higher income individuals made him feel less poor. While the underlying motivations of the new residents may have been less than benevolent to begin with, the end result outwardly was a positive one for both sides.

Furthermore, when residents move into the neighborhood with higher income, an additional benefit is that they bring along with their higher incomes greater degrees of influence. Possessing a higher income often equates to a greater degree of experience with outside entities and personalities and may enable them to better persuade individuals who control municipal, state or private funding sources to invest more time and money into the infrastructure and projects within a lower income community. Structural improvement projects as well as human enhancement programs for those who reside in communities that possess lower tax revenue bases are often underfunded or ignored altogether.

The end result of new residents' additions can hold even more benefits. The new additions may also possess the capacity to shape behaviors of the primary residents in

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[31] Ibid. ppg. 89

more constructive manners. An example of how this reinsertion / assertion of middle class individuals into what is characterized as a poor / lower income neighborhood is exemplified here,

> It takes concerted and collective action to redirect the economy or politics at the local or national level, whereas it only takes parking a BMW in front of your house to be an example of financial success for your less well off neighbors. When Oakland resident Sherry Liberty's neighbors played their music too loudly or trampled her lawn or double parked too many cars, she would politely go outside and say something. After a while, her concern for neighborhood decorum was taken up by the same people who used to violate it.[32]

In this sense, the imposition of behavioral parameters by one resident resulted in an influence on the behaviors of other residents. What this exemplifies is the ability to alter or modify behavior based upon the modeling of new residents' behaviors as adopted by the primary residents.

While neighborhoods such as North Kenwood-Oakland have experienced positive results framed within the construct of "access", one group with access to perhaps a material benefit and the other with access to psychological "uplift" and alternative behavior models, there still remain difficulties in access to good education and good school systems and their required funding. These shortfalls are central to discussions in Pattillo's and Wilson's works as they detail the lack of access to good public education in blighted areas. The process and structure of institutional racism prevails and as primary residents remain within these neighborhoods, funding for education declines. The institution of charter schools further erects barriers to primary residents' entry based on the stringent criteria for admission which limits their ability to attend. As a result, the charter schools' impeding of primary residents' attendance creates a gap between the

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[32] Ibid. ppg. 97

higher levels of education among higher-income, newly arrived, residents in a particular neighborhood and the education of the remaining residents are left to their own devices and/or relegated to attendance at less than standard schools within a particular community.

In this scenario, the presence of those with higher incomes and education in the form of activists and community leaders may come into play significantly. These residents may possess skill sets and capabilities garnered from their education and experience to share with primary residents in an effort to uplift the entire community in answer to barriers set in place against primary residents (and perhaps them all), by the "establishment" structure . When we examine systems of unequal access in areas of education and economic betterment, as Henry Giroux (2003) describes in his work, *The Abandoned Generation*, then the "sharing" of intellectual resources may contain answers to problems of persons left behind in an academic (and economic sense).

In the context of children being left behind in this process, Giroux points out that,

> Educators both within and outside of the public schools must find ways to connect their work to social policy, especially by addressing the role that public policy currently plays in undermining the basic foundations of democratic public life. The link between education and social policy is important and complex, and – as social activists and engaged citizens – educators, parents, and others need to address and support such connections…educators need to find a way under present conditions to redefine public schooling as a public good and teachers as critical intellectuals, whose pedagogical role, in part, is to link learning to social change, but also to join with community and other activists to change social policy…[33]

[33] Giroux, H.A. ppg. 97-98

The public policy that may be needed in this instance is a grassroots one where community residents take it upon themselves to fill gaps in programs and levels of education within their own communities.

Additional mitigating factors against the progress of community residents in areas of education are described by Giroux here,

> But the real scandal is not simply the government's refusal to invest in public education; it is its refusal to invest in a wide range of crucial programs that would offer children a decent life. As is well documented, 1 in 5 children is poor during the first 3 years of life, and child poverty rates for blacks and Hispanics are 30 and 28 percent, respectively. [34]

To frame this assertion into the constructs of the current discourse regarding communities of mixed economic strata, we can ascertain that reticence on the part of governing agencies to invest in public education and the additional factors of poverty requires a solution from community residents to collectively apply their knowledge, skill sets and resources to provide for the enhancement of their communities lacking the possibility of any outside help.

The issue of access is not restricted to real-time relationships between two parties within a community. Issues in access extend into the future and affect the prospects for individuals to attain a greater degree of economic security for themselves. Lacking the ability to achieve an adequate formal education within a traditional setting, individual capability to progress is impeded. Whereas collective community efforts may achieve success, there still remains the inability of lower income individuals to achieve within the larger society without a traditional education.

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[34] Giroux, ppg. 101

Annette Lareau and Dalton Conley (2008) discuss how one's ability to rise within the traditional economic structure is inextricably tied to their ability to garner certain qualifications from traditional institutions and programs. Their discussion highlights the basis of contemporary education-based meritocracy theory:

> High-level qualifications are essential if individuals are to meet the present –day requirements of professional and managerial employment. Economic and social efficiency demand that key positions should no longer be obtained merely as a result of birth and family. Rather, the prime criterion of social selection has to be educated talent as this is demonstrated through formal qualifications: achievement necessarily replaces ascription…In the new social order, differences in educational and in turn occupational attainment inevitably form the main basis of class stratification. [35]

For many lower income residents, this approach to meritocracy is blockaded by the difficulty in acquiring "formal qualifications" whenever a substandard primary education serves as an inadequate foundation for "high level" education.

This increases the need for community involvement in the establishment of grassroots programs to address disparities between the elements of education-based meritocratic theory and the reality of educational inequality. The discussion of access to knowledge expands to include not just the ability to achieve from an economic standpoint but also the ability to develop intellectually.

Among issues regarding intellectual achievement is a discussion regarding public education, its structure and objectives. Giroux (2006) argues,

> Contrary to the claims of liberal theorists and historians that public education offers possibilities for individual development, social mobility, and political and economic power to the disadvantaged and dispossessed, radical educators have argued that the main functions of schools are the reproduction of the dominant ideology, its forms of knowledge, and the distribution of skills needed to reproduce the social division of labor. In the radical perspective, schools as institutions could only be understood

[35] Lareau, A. Conley, D. ppg. 94.

> through an analysis of their relationship to the state and the economy. In this view, the deep structure or underlying significance of schooling could only be revealed through analyzing how schools functioned as agencies of social and cultural reproduction – that is, how they legitimized capitalist rationality and sustained dominant social practices.[36]

Giroux argues that the traditional system of public education was designed to create a class system comprised of workers. These workers' education in a "reproduction of the dominant ideology…" lacked training in valuable critical reasoning processes, an essential element in becoming leaders or to supersede class levels pre-determined for them by the system.

According to Paul Willis in this instance,

> Education was not about equality but inequality… Education's main purpose of the social integration of a class society could be achieved only by preparing most kids for an unequal future, and by ensuring their personal underdevelopment. Far from productive roles in the economy simply waiting to be "fairly" filled by the products of education, the 'Reproduction' perspective reversed this to suggest that capitalist production and its roles required certain outcomes.[37]

Giroux asserts that public school systems were designed to be little more than extensions of the socioeconomic political entity. He argues that the public school system served and continues to serve as a conduit for capitalist objectives through the oppression of individuals by relegating them to certain social statuses and ensuring that they remain in those classes. Giroux's arguments square with the difficulties encountered by lower income residents such as those in the North Kenwood-Oakland community, in their attempts to not only gain admittance into charter schools, but also in breaking through generational cycles of poverty or when endeavoring to ascend into higher social classes.

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[36] Giroux, H.A. The Giroux Reader. ppg. 3

[37] Willis, "Cultural Production and Theories of Reproduction," in *Race, Class and Education,* ed. Len Barton and Stephen Walker (London: Croom-Helm, 1983), ppg. 110.

The plight of those locked into poverty furthers the goal of the capitalist class to maintain a population of oppressed individuals who, in turn, substantiate the elitists' own positions. Keeping down lower-income residents like those in North Kenwood-Oakland allows capitalist elites to feel superior to them.

Giroux substantiates the need for the institution of grassroots community-based programs designed to enhance critical reasoning capabilities among residents within lower economic neighborhoods so that opportunities exist for them to succeed beyond the predetermined outcomes Giroux infers as being set for these individuals through the system of public education. A greater utility attached to such grassroots programs could also be the manner in which these programs may contribute to entrepreneurial type thinking and initiatives as a counter to ideas of vocational servitude posited through the standardized curriculums of public school systems.

An increase in the promotion of entrepreneurial endeavors within economically underserved communities may result in a positive addressing of the ability of "truly disadvantaged" individuals to be able to better bridge the gaps in economic gains while encouraging more cohesive intercommunity relationships through community-based business that fellow residents may patronize. The establishment of independent trade would provide an alternative avenue for residents disillusioned by more conventional pathways to success described previously as education-based meritocracy, and would result from a community resident's ability to reason critically regarding issues of product supply and demand as well as the need for services tailored to meet community needs.

In addition to a lack of availability of critical reasoning training from public schools within economically underserved areas, there arises an issue of the status of

"disposable populations" that are created as a result of "zero tolerance" policies of those public schools. Zero tolerance policies are yet another motivating factor for the institution of programs to meet the needs of individuals whom the system has culled out. Giroux contends that public schools have become "militarized",

> In this context, discipline and training replace education for all but the privileged as schools increasingly take on an uncanny resemblance to oversized police precincts, tragically disconnected from both the students who inhabit them and the communities that give meaning to their historical experiences and daily lives. Coupled with the corporate emphasis on privatizing schools, the motif of punishment and withdrawal – civic and interpersonal – governs this new form of school regulation and administration. [38]

In this respect, from policies such as zero tolerance coupled with an onslaught of school privatizations, a population of youth are emerging who are oftentimes hapless and misguided. This phenomenon is a consequence of the youth's lack of access to any remaining educational system willing to facilitate their development.

Clearly stated, Giroux makes a case supporting the implementation of community programs that will aid in intellectual enhancement. These programs have the capacity to provide alternatives for problems associated with zero population type policies within public school systems and posit a cure for the ills of the "disposable population" of youth. The proposal represents a radicalized educational setting which provides for an imposition of critical reasoning instruction and takes into account civic education as well as literacy:

> In this instance, critical pedagogy as an alternative form of civic education and literacy provides oppositional knowledges, skills and theoretical tools for highlighting the workings of power and reclaiming the possibility of intervening in its operations and effects..." Giroux adds insights from Cornelius Castoriadis here, "...civic education must be linked to the task

[38] Giroux. The Giroux Reader. ppg. 167

> of creating new locations of struggle that offer critical opportunities for experiencing political agency within social domains that provide the concrete conditions in which people can exercise their capabilities and skills "as part of the very process of governing."[39]

To be sure, this reasoning correlates to a requirement for an alternative pedagogy that addresses experiences, backgrounds and takes into account community settings which may be relevant to students, particularly youth from diverse backgrounds. A concise bridging between contemporary understanding and knowledge presented through canonically based curriculums is essential to enabling more successful achievement in the education of academically displaced youth.

Section III

Bridging Knowledge: Finding Voices

As a society, nation or community, our overall success is determined by our willingness to include diverse components of the human elements of our environment within the process of achievement. To characterize individuals as "disposable populations" is akin to wrenching away a limb attached to the embodiment of humanity. To this end, from an educational achievement perspective, policy makers, public education professionals, activists and community leaders, and community members all share in an obligation to develop all segments of the public body.

Exclusion is as harmful to the life of a good, civic society as it is within the scenario of children in a playground setting. The decisions regarding and actions taken with respect to one segment of the population over another are analogous to Vivian Paley's (1992) description of children's behaviors, "How casually one child determines

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[39] Ibid. ppg. 170, Castoriadis, C. (1997). Democracy as procedure and democracry as regime. *Constellations 4,* no 1:11.

the fate of another."[40] Paley's admonishing title, "You can't say you can't play", must serve as a guide for how the guardians of society frame their thinking with respect to knowledge and education for all present and for whom we should all be concerned. In order to complete this obligation to those who have been customarily denied access to knowledge and education, we must build a bridge across the sea of barriers.

To engage in an argument as to whether or not a divide exists between canonical literature and the cultural perceptions of minority youth would be a short lived dispute; one would merely have to scan popular reading material which specializes in minority youth readership. Much of what is published in teen literature and media is galaxies away in cultural content from that which is presented in canons of literature.

More importantly perhaps are the *reasons why* the cultural gaps may exist. African Americans' cultural (and literary) expressions compiled during and since slavery provided them with their own collective library and sets of ideals. To paraphrase Pierre Bayard (2007), "collective inner books" or perceptions based on commonly held "stories" and experiences from among members of the African American community may shade the imposition of newer additions or new concepts. The contrast of ideas and even language within this African American collective library, against those promoted through the Anglo collective library may account for some of this distance.[41]

Further, schools and school systems in predominantly minority neighborhoods systematically experience forms of "canonical literary segregation" within public education which has persisted since the *Brown* ruling. Attention focusing on curriculums with content grounded upon the canonical is not afforded a high priority within minority

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[40] Paley, V. (1992). You can't say you can't play. ppg. 3. Cambridge, MA. Harvard University Press.
[41] Bayard, P. (2007). How to talk about books you haven't read. New York, NY. Bloomsbury USA.

educational institutions; often they operate within substandard structures under constricted budget constraints with minimal faculty. There simply aren't enough dollars to go around, much less to spring for copies of *Hamlet.* In addition, there is little money available for English texts out of what board budgets afford to minority schools, not to mention being able to pay the types of salaries that would attract teachers who may even be able to decipher Shakespeare.

Some may argue against the value of canonical literacy; they question the worth of proposing new introductions into the inner books of minority youth by way of "White, cultural assimilationist tools." The worth and value of those tools, however, can be seen through standardized test results which may ultimately open or shutter doors to higher education and roads to possible advantages for those youth. The following table demonstrates how Black, Mexican American, Puerto Rican and other Hispanic youth all scored significantly lower than Asian and White 2009 college-bound seniors.[42]

[42] http://professionals.collegeboard.com/profdownload/cbs-2009-national-TOTAL-GROUP.pdf

Table 8: Total Mean Scores by Ethnicity

SAT	Test-Takers		Critical Reading		Mathematics		Writing	
Test-Takers Who Described Themselves As:	Number	Pct	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
American Indian or Alaska Native	8,974	1	486	106	493	107	469	103
Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander	158,757	10	516	122	587	125	520	123
Black or African American	187,136	12	429	96	426	97	421	93
Mexican or Mexican American	79,766	5	453	98	463	99	446	94
Puerto Rican	22,881	1	452	102	450	104	443	100
Other Hispanic, Latino, or Latin American	103,937	7	455	104	461	106	448	101
White	851,014	56	528	102	536	103	517	102
Other	51,215	3	494	119	514	119	493	116
No Response	66,448	4	472	134	501	128	469	126
Total	1,530,128	100	501	112	515	116	493	111

The overall depiction of scores among the aforementioned groups illustrates that critical reading and writing levels not only fall below those of their counterparts but also, that among the three subjects gauged, critical reading and writing scores fell below or were nearly equal to the low scores registered in mathematics. While exposure to traditional literature may be of less assistance toward the heightening of math or even writing scores, many standardized tests contain questions which assume a student has received an education that utilizes complex reading materials and that includes canonical literature as a fundamental basis of its curriculum.

With these challenges in mind, let us assume that minority youth were educated in an environment in which there existed ample opportunities for their engagement with canonical literature. New challenges would then arise: in what manner should an educator proceed when introducing this "new information" to the inner book(s) of the youth, respecting and preserving their culture, while simultaneously bridging gaps in cross cultural perceptions? Further, how does one promote the youth's confidence in these

areas of literature with which they may not share a direct cultural connection? Is either even possible?

Pierre Bayard's work includes a description of anthropologist Laura Bohannan's interaction with the Tiv tribe of West Africa. In this encounter, Dr. Bohannan attempts (unsuccessfully), to explain the universal message of Hamlet to the tribespeople while at the same time paying homage to the Tiv's customs and traditions. Ultimately, Bohannan's education of the Tiv resulted in a co-education; as she paused to take side notes of her observations of their culture, she also obtained a fundamental understanding of the Tiv's *collective library* which was essential to *their* inherent understanding of *Hamlet*. Through her "screening" (translation) of *Hamlet* into a version which was palatable to the Tiv's cultural comprehension of the general theme, the culture was preserved and respected, and the Tiv, unabashed and unthreatened by the "new information" took it into their library and re-expressed it from their screen, (inner translation), with confidence. [43]

It is through methods similar to the one employed in the preceding example that it may become possible to bridge gaps in cross cultural perceptions. Ethnographer Shirley Brice Heath's (1983) research discusses how teachers and students may work in concert to narrow educational divides. Teachers on the one side, "…altered ways of teaching [which] allowed some children to succeed who might not have otherwise done so."[44] This was achieved in much the same manner as with the Tiv. Teachers reformatted the

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[43] Ibid.
[44] Heath, Brice, S. (1983). Ways with Words: Language, life and work in communities and classrooms. ppg. 355-356. New York, NY. Cambridge University Press.

language into what fit into the students' collective libraries. Students in turn, were provided with tools which enabled them to identify with the:

> ...language of other communities. In a sense, students had to learn to "code switch" between systems...Students engaged in a process of self awareness by which they, in a sense, *re*constructed a social and cognitive system of meanings. In this reconstruction, however, they neither reserved classroom ways of learning for school only nor did they destroy or replace the community habits of knowing and using language they had brought to school.[45]

In short, the students continued to respect and preserve their culture and proceeded to confidently "code switch". Of particular note in Heath's Roadville / Trackton research is that the students represented were from varied racial groups, giving rise to its multicultural value.[46]

So, is it necessary to reformat an entire educational system in order to accommodate minority youth students' language of learning? Lisa Delpit (1995) asserts that a solution may lie in a modification of the methods of teaching:

> ...where teachers' assessments of competence are influenced by the dialect children speak, teachers may develop low expectations for certain students and subsequently teach them less. A second explanation, which lends itself more readily to observation, rests in teachers' confusing the teaching of reading with the teaching of a new dialect form. [47]

In her section on language diversity and learning, Delpit discusses how the students' speech patterns cause teachers to make judgments concerning their ability to learn. Further those teachers then set about attempting to instruct the students in "proper diction" rather than allowing them to engage in the practice of reading, unencumbered and uninterrupted when students read aloud.

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[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Delpit, L. (1995). Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom. ppg. 58. New York, NY. The New Press

Although students mispronounced words when reading aloud, their verbalization did not indicate a miscomprehension of the subject matter. Delpit describes an instance where a student reads aloud and is continually corrected by the teacher and its result:

> First, because children become better readers by having the opportunity to read, the overcorrection exhibited in this lesson means that this child will be less likely to become a fluent reader than other children who are not interrupted so consistently. Second, a complete focus on code and pronunciation blocks children's understanding that reading is essentially a meaning making process. This child, who understands the text, is led to believe that she is doing something wrong. She is encouraged to think of reading not as something you do to get a message, but something you pronounce. Third, constant corrections by the teacher are likely to cause this student and others like her to resist reading and to resent the teacher.[48]

The important component, which was overlooked by the teacher, of the reading process for the student in this example was that the student was actively translating what they were reading into the language of their inner voice in an effort to comprehend its meaning. The student in this case, either neglected to or was not educated in the fundamentals of verbal "code switching". Teachers, in this instance, were not promoting reading, but actually were inhibiting it.

Taken together with the results of Heath's fundamental research, Delpit's findings appear to indicate that the onus of the responsibility for narrowing cross cultural divides lies within the grasp of a teacher's ability to accept the existence of students' (minority and perhaps others) collective libraries. If teachers are able to co-educate with students in the ability to code switch, both groups may gain a valuable bi-cultural capability.

The incorporation of diversity in expression of both the language of learning and educating are important elements for the success of countering differences in cultural understanding. While Delpit and others express a need to embrace diversity within

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[48] Ibid. ppg. 59

educational curriculums, she stresses the need for learning based on the language of the prevailing culture:

> The language associated with the power structure – "Standard English" – is the language of economic success, and all students have the right to schooling that gives them access to that language. [49]

This point leads us back to an earlier one in the discourse regarding the value of canonical literature. Opportunities for acceptance to better higher institutions of learning and subsequently better employment increase from access to and knowledge of canonical literature. However, it raises an additional question with regard to the nature of traditional literature. Given its power, in what manner does traditional literature relate to those in such vulnerable positions as minority youth and their ability or inability to obtain enough confidence to raise their inner voice to the authority contained within?

In a further effort to bridge the gap in cross-cultural perceptions, the next and perhaps a more formidable step in the process would be to take on the educational behemoth itself. James Banks' (2001) discourse on efforts to reformulate canonical literature discusses the failure of the dominant canons to address the cultural concerns of minorities across the structure of American edification. While Banks concurs that all Americans must possess shared knowledge, he takes issue with,

> The Western-centric and male-centric canon [which] often marginalizes the experiences of people of color, Third World nations and cultures, and the perspectives and the histories of women. [50]

A significant stride toward opening the inner book of minority youth to the challenge of new literary experiences would be to retrace the steps back along the literary

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[49] Ibid. ppg. 59

[50] Banks, James A. (2001). Cultural diversity and education: Foundations, curriculum, and teaching. ppg. 201. Needham Heights, MA. Allyn & Bacon.

communicative road to ascertain "where they are coming from" so one would be able to get on the "same page" with them. The information presented under what Banks terms "school knowledge" represents a disconnection from the inner books of most minority youth's collective libraries and consequently, many lose interest.

To resolve this problem, Banks proposes a "Transformative Curriculum" as part of his solution. This curriculum provides tools to assist students to develop critical thinking skills regarding the current socioeconomic political structure and includes,

> The facts, concepts, paradigms, themes and explanations that challenge mainstream academic knowledge and expand and substantially revise established canons, paradigms, theories and research methods.[51]

This method provides students with a full range of information and allows them to reason from within their own inner knowledge to determine what most reasonably fits within their own inner book. The objective is to encourage students to engage in the learning process. This encouragement would be best accomplished through extending a more psychologically comfortable attitude to the recipients, one which is less threatening, and more accepting toward their culture with a more attentive ear toward the recipient's inner voice, which returns us to Dr. Laura Bohannan and the Tiv.

Bohannan's more "imposed" listening and note taking, among the Tiv, was similar in nature to Delpit's advocated method of listening and learning for teachers. Delpit's recognition that, "… constant corrections by the teacher are likely to cause… student… to resist… and to resent the teacher." is reminiscent of Dr. Bohannan's

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[51] Ibid. 198

alterations to Hamlet in an effort to avoid insulting the Tiv so as to further the objectives of her research. [52]

Most importantly, was the resultant attitude of the Tiv. In the end, the old man's words convey confidence in an area of literature which interested him, "That was a very good story…you must tell us some more stories of your country. We…will instruct you in their true meaning, so that when you return to your own land your elders will see that you have not been sitting in the bush, but among those who know things and who have taught you wisdom."[53] Perhaps this is due in large part to the fact that Bohannan took pains to ensure that she was attentive to the Tiv's inner voices / collective library and respected their culture and traditions while simultaneously trying to bridge the gaps in cross cultural perceptions. Hence, the old man raised his inner voice to authority.

Perhaps there is an alternative method that would allow for minority youth to preserve their inner voices and cultures while resolving breaches in cross-cultural understandings. Bayard's theories concerning non–readers not being ashamed fits nicely within the program in which I currently work; they certainly *are* non–readers who are definitely *not* ashamed. However, in the case of these and perhaps all youth, I don't believe that non reading is a good solution. In many ways, the youth I work with embody Bayard's statement: "Truth destined for others is less important than truthfulness to ourselves, something attainable only by those who free themselves from the obligation to seem cultivated…"[54] The tragedy is that the value of their amazing intelligence is lost without a formal education which includes traditional literature.

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[52] Delpit. ppg. 68
[51] Bayard, P. (2007). How to talk about books you haven't read. ppg. 130. New York, NY. Bloomsbury
[54] Ibid.

This brings us to the choice of methods in the practical application for an effective, alternative, grassroots program that would successfully serve groups at the heart of this discussion. In order to reach a diverse audience and to ensure their adequate reception and comprehension and retention of the information presented, information and its delivery method must be suited to the audience's understanding.

Giroux (1989) discusses methods within popular culture for schooling,

> Educators who refuse to acknowledge popular culture as a significant basis of knowledge often devalue students by refusing to work with the knowledge that students actually have and so eliminate the possibility of developing a pedagogy that links school knowledge to the differing subject relations that help to constitute their everyday lives.[55]

Succinctly, this reinserts earlier discussions regarding the impact of technology such as electronic and social media and the like. Of note here however, is the argument that the day-to-day construct of contemporary life is oftentimes misaligned with the proscriptions contained within traditional literature and public educational schematics.

The process to be implemented as part of a type of step-by-step guide to achieving success within this contemporized environment and in the engagement of diverse students is to first establish parameters that designate *how* the learning process is to take place. One of the more creative methods, *the independent learning process* is promoted through the work of philosopher Lee Rademacher. Rademacher's (2004) pedagogy includes more questioning than answering on the part of educators. This process counters the conducting of lectures, in which all of the information and answers are provided. Rather, Rademacher's method calls for educators to provide students with a baseline of information and then allow students to employ Socratic methods in an effort to determine

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[55] Giroux, H.A. (1989). Popular culture schooling and everyday life. ppg. 3. New York, NY. Bergin & Garvey.

the answers. The instructor becomes a guide in this process and is an encouraging, rather than a discouraging factor.

The process of students delving for solutions receives the primary emphasis more than an emphasis on a correct answer. These types of methods are being utilized by academics that employ methods where students are engaged in a more critical pedagogical process that emphasizes students' work. Giroux (1993) highlights an example of how one such educator assisted students in bridging cultural gaps between the students' family narrations and a textbook accounting of history,

> …Katie Singer has worked with students at South Boston High School in Massachusetts to conduct oral histories of their communities, family life, neighborhood, and other issues as part of a broader project to produce anthologies to be used in the writing and bilingual programs. In these examples, not only are borders being challenged, crossed and refigured, but borderlands are being created in which the very production and acquisition of knowledge is being used by students to rewrite their own histories, identities, and learning possibilities[56]

In this manner, students' retention is likely to be increased due to an individual's increased ability to best process and recall information that is directly relevant to her life experience. New information that is presented and attached to personal memories can be remembered along with the personal memory. In a history course, for example, students are able to comprehend larger textbook accounts by framing them within their personal narratives.

Rademacher formalizes this pedagogical theory through his discussion of Student Centered Models versus Teacher Centered Models. This discourse is couched within an overarching concept which he calls, *The Harmonization Model*. Under this model,

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[56] Giroux, H. A. (1993). Border crossings: Cultural workers and the politics of education. ppg. 30. New York, NY. Routledge.

Rademacher advocates allowing students to "validate learning on their own terms", thus encouraging students to place traditional knowledge into the context of their own backgrounds and experiences,

> The Harmonization Model provides an opportunity for students to go beyond the Teacher Centered Model… This means that the teacher will give up part of his / her "power" as a teacher and relegate some of the responsibility of learning on the student, who must take a more active role. As for the student, he / she needs to rely less on a teacher for learning and becoming a more active participant. The teacher becomes, then, a valuable resource, who has knowledge and skill, and who can help the student as a guide.[57]

Under these parameters, teachers may be reluctant to relinquish some of their authority within a classroom where they are usually the focus of attention. It must be remembered, however, that the attention and the focus of learning should be on students. In this model, students are not only the primary beneficiaries of the attention but students must also strive harder to engage more actively in their own learning process as Rademacher states, "…learning becomes a process of self improvement and less to appease the person who is doing the teaching."[58]

The teacher becomes empowered by relinquishing some centralized authority while experiencing an increase in student learning and the student becomes empowered and gains self-esteem by taking control of their own knowledge acquisition. This harmonization is important when engaging with or when implementing alternative programs within communities of economic need or in communities of color with diverse populations, since the sense of empowerment / self esteem that is conveyed to the students not only enables further development of critical reasoning skills but also, may

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[57] Rademacher, L. (2004). Learning to learn. ppg. 64. Lincoln, NE. iUniverse, Inc.
[58] Ibid. ppg. 64

empower students from a psychological perspective. Students, who may have felt disassociated from the structure of learning prior to this process, may have also earned lower test scores calculated among educational statistics. The self esteem garnered through these types of models may inspire better academic achievement among the youth participating in them.

An example of the how The Sidewalk Scholar implements the Harmonization model can be seen in the following vignette: We introduced Machiavelli's *The Prince* and encouraged the youth to group themselves for a discussion of how Machiavelli's theory plays out in their lives. The instructors allowed the youth to conduct the discussion with minimal assistance. At the end, their discussion resulted in one that addressed whether or not it is honest to manipulate people to obtain a certain objective. Some argued that one should be honest about the reasoning behind acquiescing to a view to which they do not subscribe. In this manner, we were able to employ the Harmonization model which the youth superimposed with the virtue of truth.

Educators also have at their disposal tools which may be utilized to assist in individualized learning processes. As was discussed previously, while effects from electronic media may figure significantly in decreases in interpersonal relationships, electronic media may also be instrumental to a student's learning process. If a prevailing educational culture is poised against the use of contemporary learning aids, the tendency will be for students, who are large consumers of such devices, to disengage from learning methods where they are disallowed. Embracing these prospective learning resources may constitute an avenue for educators to pursue in presenting knowledge.

Learning resources need not exclusively include books, laptops or internet resources; just as books and the internet may be valuable learning resources, people within one's community may prove just as valuable a resource. Mentors, activists, community leaders, family members, neighbors and as was discussed earlier, any individual who has knowledge and expertise to share can serve as learning resources. Rademacher concurs:

> A resource is very similar to a tool, but there is a slight difference. A resource is typically thought of as something that can provide you with additional information or knowledge in what you are learning. Anyone who teaches a skill or some kind of information is a resource....A mentor, counselor or fellow learner can be a resource.[59]

All of these resources can serve as tools for learning in a more contemporary sense. When you add to this list things that interest and engage students such as music and many other forms of creative expression such as spoken word and rap, the tools become more effective. When students participate in collective activities, their active participation may increase comprehension and retention of content since interactive methods of learning are more likely to hold their interest over methods where the students are not actively engaged.

Subsequently, the learning process may become more transformative for students and can result in their modifying their behaviors in the same manner that Sherry Liberty's neighbors' behaviors in her North Kenwood-Oakland neighborhood began to transform. When Ms. Liberty's polite urgings served as a guide, her neighbors voluntarily began to conduct themselves differently. This example provides an illustration of Rademacher's harmonization model; that is, the role of the guide is less emphasized than the role of the

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[59] Rademacher. ppg. 106

participants. The greater responsibility for this dynamic process is incumbent upon the students' / neighbors' engagement.

Paulo Freire's (2005) discourse regarding literacy and learning highlights relationships in the cycle of learning:

> We must remember that there is a dynamic movement between thought, language, and the reality that, if well understood, results in a greater creative capacity. The more we experience the dynamics of such movement, the more we become critical subjects concerning the process of knowing, teaching, learning, reading, writing, and studying. In the end, and in its more profound reading, to study involves the establishment of linkages among these relationships.[60]

When the cycle of thought, language and understanding is effected from an intellectual standpoint, we infer from Freire's assertions that: "…a reading [is] made extremely close to the text…"take[ing] some distance" from the object… [and allowing] them [students] to make a new reading, one more truthful to the text, to the context…The taking of distance…brought them closer to…a text being read." The dynamic movement being discussed here creates an intellectual transformation that results when students employ critical reasoning to establish linkages between their reality and what is being presented to them. This is caused by making the content relevant to their experiences. Linking presented material to their reality decreases the distance in comprehending ways that a reading correlates to their own manner of knowing based on their inherent experience(s).[61]

Students are enabled to attach new information that develops their "inner book" in such a way that the "pages" of respective memories begin to expand as the new

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[60] Freire, P. (2005). Teachers as cultural workers: Letters to those who dare teach. ppg. 3. Cambridge, MA. Westview Press.
[61] Ibid, ppg. 39

information is combined with what they "know" and becomes a part of those memories. Freire writes,

> To study is to uncover; it is to gain a more exact comprehension of an object, it is to realize its relationships to other objects. This implies a requirement for risk taking and venturing on the part of a student, the subject of learning, for without that they do not create or re-create.[62]

Freire's theory infers that teaching is more than a practice of relegating knowledge from teacher to student and that it should exceed rote memorization on the part of students. Rather, the process of learning should contain a critical understanding of the material by students by making correlations between it and knowledge that is familiar to them. The harmonization model joins this view and provides for a practical application of Freire's theory.

The harmonization model embraces the practice of refocusing the attention from teacher to student and encourages students to make more independent assertions. This process not only assists in critical reasoning skills for students but also, allows students more levity in connecting the presented material to what in their experience relates to the new material.

The removal of esoteric language from the process of learning in an effort to further increase students' understanding is also argued by Freire as a:

> ...critical way of comprehending and realizing the reading of the word...on the one hand...in not dismissing simpler language, simple innocent language, "unguarded", innocent language. It lies in not devaluing such language because it is based on concepts developed in day-to- day experience, in the world of sensory experience. On the other hand, it also lies in moving away from the concept of "difficult language," impossible language, as development occurs around abstract concepts.

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[62] Ibid. ppg. 40

> This critical way of comprehending and realizing the reading of the text and context does not exclude either variety of language, of syntax.[63]

While we cannot completely move away from complex language because it is difficult to understand, we should engage students' interest in learning by avoiding the erecting of initial barriers to that interest through the presentation of the material in abstruse terms. The use of language more palatable to students, positive language which they encounter within their communities, can serve as an additional encouragement for them to engage their learning ambitions.

Section IV
Community engagement strategies

The establishment of any organization, whether for profit or not-for-profit contains challenges from both an operational and an economic perspective. Current attitudes regarding not-for-profit organizations and funding sources further exacerbate these issues. While more sizeable nonprofits are undergoing pressure from funding sources to adopt structures resembling for-profit entities in an effort to increase efficiency and effectiveness, the concern remains whether or not such organizations may be equally attentive to their bottom lines and the "…social capital that links people to their communities and to others?" A glancing familiarity with a fundamental, civic based purpose for nonprofits would solicit a negative response. [64]

For the purpose of this discussion, our model follows a more communitarian view. The communitarian view perceives voluntary associations as ones that predate

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[63] Ibid. ppg. 40
[64] Boris, E.T., Steuerle, C.E. (2006). Nonprofits & government: Collaboration & conflict. ppg. 19. Washington, DC. The Urban Press Institute

governments and markets and are based on social relationships with communities. A shortfall associated with nonprofits that are established on a communitarian model is based on gaps in funding that result from their disassociation with well funded politically or economically-based organizations. Politically or economically-based nonprofits tend to generate more revenue due to their large membership numbers and correspondingly large donations.

The choice to serve one's community can be an expensive venture unless the practice of concise planning and careful budgeting is put in place and adhered to. Minimal funding does not necessarily mean a lack of support; it may well mean that many supporters of communitarian projects are true believers with shallow rather than deep pockets. Minimal funding normally equates to a lack of resources for operational costs and supplies. This being said, costs must be continually and carefully monitored.

Unfortunately, *social capital* does little to pay the bills. The recompense for this type of hand-to-mouth endeavor, in the eyes of some, far outweighs the financial difficulties. The payment lies within the voices of children **begging** to read or in a parent's expression of gratitude for taking her child into your program when no one else would have her. The rewards are found within a community where all are welcome to succeed.

Having stated our position within the realm of nonprofits, we are left with the matter of outlining the specific components necessary to run a communitarian-modeled nonprofit that receives minimal funding but that also operates with minimal overhead.

The first step in establishing a community-based, grassroots program is to *develop a plan*. The initial order of business in composing this plan is to determine the

type of organization to be established; literacy, mentoring, sports, etc. Next, set an *objective* for the organization. In this step, one must decide what *desired outcome* is to be achieved. Outcomes determine how, within an ongoing operation, the organization will run once it has reached your concept of optimal daily operation.

Second, determine the *structure* of the organization. Will it service the community as a for-profit, not-for-profit or cooperative organization, partisan, nonpartisan or value-based (religious, cultural, ideological or artistic values and beliefs)? Once the structure has been established, one may ask, what form of *organizational architecture* will operate within this structure?

There are many types of organizational architectures to choose from: there are hierarchy community phenotype models in which community members and their participation and authority runs in tandem with that of the formal organizational staff; foundational organization designs, which are topped by a board of trustees, followed by a committee level which sits atop the director level, and houses a staff level at the bottom. There are also traditional non-profit organizational schematics which mirror foundational organizational designs with the exception of the top level, which consists of a board of directors rather than trustees.

Whatever the type of organizational architecture chosen, operational control and accountability must be established in some coherent format in order to achieve effective operation. The question of *staffing* must also be addressed. Choices of whether or not to employ a salaried or volunteer staff must be made. Funding constraints may restrict salaried staffing significantly and, if staff funding is available, consider the types of qualifications they would need to possess and whether or not they would serve dual roles

in the administration of the program as well as play an active part in its practical operation.

If an organization is staffed through volunteers, issues concerning time commitments are certain to be in the offing. Unsalaried persons have the option of opting out at any time without notice. Additionally, sources of volunteer assistance must be considered along with factors such as background checks (a paramount concern when working with children), along with the proper assignment of tasks for volunteers. Individuals who volunteer their time are reticent to stand around waiting to be tasked. The Sidewalk Scholar has been extremely fortunate in the types of volunteers who have signed on: volunteers in South Bend program arrived with leadership skills that enabled them to take the initiative in many instances.

Third, *location* is also an important factor to be considered. When operating a community-based organization, it follows logically that the organization should be housed within the community to be served but, that aside, a location which is centrally situated within the community that is accessible to prospective program participants must be determined. Coupled with location concerns are issues of proximity to transportation, parking availability and traffic intensity in areas surrounding the location. Younger children must be attended to and protected from busy roadways and intersections. *Hours of operation* must be determined. Will the organization operate daily or a few days a week? How will the location be paid for? The Sidewalk Scholar has operated nearly cost free (a total of $187.00 was spent for materials for fall 2011) due to space donated from churches and community centers.

Fourth, any plan to establish a community-based literacy program must contain a comprehensive list of required materials such as *books,* and *learning tools/resources.* Learning tools, resources, and supplies can constitute highly perishable and expensive but *calculable expenditures*, along with equipment such as computers and internet access. Not to belabor the point, requesting donations from local business can be surprisingly fruitful. If the *program facility* is to be leased or purchased, operational costs (utilities, cleaning, etc.) must be factored into the overall operating budget. These costs fall away with donated space. This has been evidenced through The Sidewalk Scholar's housing within donated church and community center spaces.

If *food* is to be served, the type and cost of foodstuffs along with food handling concerns and corresponding health code regulations must also be considered. When operating a youth-based program, the frequency and length of the program will be a determining factor in the decision to include meals / snacks. Depending upon the frequency and duration of regular programs, youths will expect to be fed. Within economically underserved communities children are oftentimes undernourished and it is likely that they will show up hungry or become hungry while attending the program. Attempting to educate or engage children who are hungry is no easy feat. Again, soliciting for donations from local grocery stores helped us to mitigate food costs.

A fifth element to be considered when planning to establish a community-based organization centers on whether or not participants have pre-existing *medical conditions* and if any participants are under prescription medication. To revisit food issues, considerations must be given to food-based allergies (peanuts, soy, milk, etc.). Plans

addressing first aid training among program staff members and volunteers along with safety procedures must be implemented.

The resolution of *emotional issues* must be given adequate attention as part of the operational plan. Children from underserved communities may endure difficulties which accompany impoverished backgrounds. Be prepared with a contingency plan for unexpected temper flares. A number of our volunteers possess counseling backgrounds as well as connections to local social service agencies.

Sixth is the issue of a *curriculum* that is tied to the type of program to be established. If the proposed program will focus on educational subject matters such as literacy, a comprehensive curriculum can be constructed through the researching of state educational requirements so that the program content augments rather than conflicts, with participants' current traditional educational requirements. Again, volunteers with educational backgrounds such as teachers and school administrators have been of great benefit to our program.

While this discourse was not designed to be an all inclusive "how to" guide, it is my hope that it will provide some insights for and will be useful to community activists or educators who see the need for and have the desire to institute such programs. The forms included in the attached appendix are included for general use and may be modified and shared for further programs if desired.

In expanding the scholarly discourse concerning public, community-accessible education, this thesis is not meant to advocate for or to malign any one educational program over another. It is my hope that other community activists will contribute to the literacy discourse. My objective is to raise questions concerning the current state of

educational programs and to highlight alternative methods and to provide suggestions for enhancement. The Sidewalk Scholar's aim is to better serve communities and society through the positive development of youth.

Section V

Running community-based literacy programs: In your own words

As a young girl growing up on Chicago's South Side, I lived in a neighborhood where children respected their elders. In part, because the punishment for disrespecting your elderly neighbors consisted of corporal punishment from one's parents; the other reason was because the punishment for disrespecting your elderly neighbors consisted of corporal punishment from one's elderly neighbors.

There was an elderly woman who lived on my street named Mrs. Jackson. Every morning that wasn't freezing, Mrs. Jackson would drag an old card table and two rusty, metal chairs outside onto the sidewalk. She'd sit there all day and when kids would come home from school and walk past her, she'd ask what they learned that day.

One day, I walked past her house after school and she asked me what I'd learned. I told her about my history class and I parroted all of the terms exactly the way the teacher had recited them. Mrs. Jackson looked at me incredulously and said, "You really don't understand what all of that means." She pointed at her head and said, "You come back when you can explain it to me, *in your own words, then I'll know you got it."*

The Sidewalk Scholar's methodology for youth literacy allows for maximum student participation / interaction in the learning process by encouraging students to manipulate raw information into "their own words" and to re-present the information to instructors in varying, creative formats.

The Sidewalk Scholar was established in Chicago in 2009 as a program aimed at honing students' interpretive ability through the use of interactive pedagogy. Our goal is to provide an avenue towards greater literacy capacity, particularly among at-risk, minority, and lower income youth. It is an ongoing program that seeks to promote literacy by augmenting (or providing an alternative to) current traditional educational programs.

During attendance in a Medieval Political Theory course in 2008 at Notre Dame, I began to formulate ways to re-interpret canonical knowledge in contemporized formats. My first work was a piece that translated *Nicomachean* friendships into ones based on inner city circumstances. Encouraged by my professor's reaction I began to fulfill an overwhelming desire to share my love of literature with youth.

Returning to my old neighborhood following a decade and a half absence which included college, military service and a lucrative business venture, I was met with an eerie scene: gone were the stores that had sold fresh fruits and vegetables, locally owned restaurants were shuttered and the porches where people previously sat and socialized with neighbors, were all vacant. The only perceivable life forms were positioned on street corners conducting brisk drive-up drug sales or lounging outside of liquor stores which had taken the place of storefront churches. Most were children ranging in age from 10 to 16. The darkness of the atmosphere summoned me to recollections of Plato's allegorical cavern. My enthusiasm towards "guardianship" was momentarily dampened.

Nevertheless, having been raised on the South Side of Chicago I felt as though I still possessed a degree of knowledge regarding the area's inner workings--its inherent culture, customs and the general interests of its residents. Whatever the changes it had

undergone, this was still *my* neighborhood and *my* people. Questions of a generation came to bear: "If not me, who? If not now, when?"

It occurred to me that the ability to relate the content I wished to convey to the direct experiences of my students, given their contemporary circumstances, was of paramount importance. In order for me to effectively be able to relate any ethical themes from a reading of Hamlet to kids in my old neighborhood, first, I'd have to capture their interest. Instead of, "Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended" and "Mother, you have my father much offended", the words were transformed to: "Hamlet, you dissin' your daddy" and "No, Mama, *you* dissin' my daddy!" The narrative's conversion into a vernacular more natural and palatable to the literary tastes of my audience than the original version, hopes to hold the meaning of the passage in its translation. [65]

I began work in earnest transforming many canonical works studied during my undergraduate years into shortened, contemporized, "cliffs notes" in order to provide seeds for my students' interpretation of the works' innate concepts. I was thankful for my educational grounding in political theory and for my history minor as well as a long standing personal interest in literature, all of which proved very helpful in the process. Rather than delay the program's start, I dove headlong into the initiative with students and a classroom offered by an after school program located in one of the few remaining neighborhood churches. I found that churches, community centers and even schools during off hours, are great (and sometimes free), resources for program locations. You simply need to outline your attempts toward community betterment and ask for any assistance that the organization(s) may offer toward your initiative. Requests for community help promote opportunities for the involvement of additional community

[65] Bevington, D. Kastan, D.S. (2005). Shakespeare: Hamlet. ppg. 163. New York, NY. Bantam Dell.

leaders and activists while casting an inclusive and cohesive community spirit with your efforts.

At this point, anyone who believes that the initial outcome of our Chicago - based efforts were reminiscent of "story time with the children", has never visited and spent time with children in my old neighborhood. Instead of listening to the initial storyline, those youth (aged 12-17), would start talking, texting, fighting or would simply leave. It took about 5 sessions to figure out that I needed to give *them* the printed out story lines and to let *them* read it themselves and discuss it.

When I stepped back into the background and evolved from lecturer to learning aid, something happened. The students stepped forward and…talked, and talked and talked about the story lines. They talked about their own experiences that related to the story; they talked about other people's experiences that related to the stories. I became kind of a "go – to" "Auntie" (pronounced ain'tee), that settles academically - based disputes. In the case of Hamlet, my mediating services were called upon in this manner: "Auntie, *who* killed the uncle…? See I told you man…!" From then on, I was put to task; they wanted more and more "stories" once a week and then twice a week and then three times a week. Keeping up with their thirst for content expanded my own knowledge as I was forced to absorb and transform more and more works in order to stay ahead of the students.

Fortunately, after nearly three months, I was able to garner volunteers to assist with the work, many of whom were students attending City College of Chicago programs that'd heard by word of mouth of my fledgling program and were interested in gaining experience. Some neighborhood residents who eventually became volunteers had begun

as curious onlookers: "…what ya'll doin' in here anyway…?" After the initial, "…them kids ain't gonna listen to nobody…" I knew I had them. When I suggested to my detractors that perhaps the kids would listen to *them*, their grumblings of, "…Lord we got to help this crazy woman…" evolved into the active support I needed. I also tapped relationships with former college professors who were (and remain), great sources for new ideas regarding primary sources. When I explained to those academics that I needed "expert" help, they began to provide invaluable scholarly support in the form of content recommendations as well as through contributions of their own interpretive essays.

Now entering our third year of programming, The Sidewalk Scholar's Chicago initiative has grown to approximately 110 participants with 28 regular volunteers housed within two Southside locations. The initial curriculum has expanded from three – two hour afterschool sessions per week to a full – five days a week program that offers homework help and one on one mentoring.

As I continued my studies at Notre Dame, my husband I purchased a home in South Bend in order to be closer to the university, and I continued to commute daily to Chicago. Friends in South Bend who were aware of my work in Chicago began to suggest that I initiate a program in the local area. Following a short study of the local culture and existing area programs, we mirrored the overall concepts of programs such as the South Bend literacy program for homeless adults headed by Steve Fallon and Clark Power. We tailored our program to meet the community's demographic needs and in the fall of 2011, The Sidewalk Scholar began to provide benefits to youth in the South Bend community through a tuition free Saturday school, staffed by volunteer teaching professionals.

As community cultures vary from region to region, in contrast to our more homegrown Chicago standing, The Sidewalk Scholar's "outsider" reputation among some close knit South Bend residents was met with an initial coolness. From the onset, we found a greater degree of support from Indiana University South Bend faculty and students who bridged our path into a more politically charged environment through introductions to local community leaders / activists and by providing university run space for our original location. IUSB faculty also facilitated our ability to access student volunteers and provided intellectual support during the program's planning stages. As a result, The Sidewalk Scholar's South Bend initiative enjoyed overwhelming success in its first eight week semester and by end of the term, the participant base expanded from 20–25 to 35-40 students, causing the program to relocate to a larger space offered by a local church.

Prior to beginning the South Bend project in the fall of 2011, I was privileged to study many insightful works during my enrollment in the Master of Liberal Studies program at Indiana University South Bend. It was during this academic pursuit that the goal of establishing a community-based program for literacy in South Bend was formulated. From the onset, the MLS program provided significant academic guidance and theoretical and literary augmentation toward the successful initiation of this project. Coupling this educational experience with others, I deduced that those who have been historically underserved along with those who are currently economically underserved stand in the direst need of programs which are adjusted to best suit their academic needs.

The program's objective was inspired in part by Annette Lareau's (2003) work which supports the premise that class and race play significant roles in the education of

youth, along with interfamily relationships.[66] Although Lareau's work centers more on communicative means as they impact a child's academic / future achievement, her study also clarifies the manner in which a students' learning opportunities shape their future academically, economically, and psychologically. An underlying theme of this category of research is the concept that success in life rests upon a student's improved literacy. Our pedagogical structure was also informed by research conducted by additional educational and sociological experts such as Shirley Brice Heath, Lisa Delpit, James Banks and others who highlight the distinctions in educational opportunities along the lines of class and race. [67] The Sidewalk Scholar attempts to broaden the learning process of the underserved through the promotion of literacy.

The ability to effectively convey ethical themes inherent within canonical literature to academically underserved and or minority students involves more than mere translation. It requires a deep understanding of canonical cultures as well as the divergent cultures of the students. Section II provided a brief description of what Lisa Delpit characterizes as "code switching".

Code switching is a complex mental process that involves students' and teachers' ability to read literature and to comprehend its words and meaning while in an almost simultaneous action, "switching" the words without losing much or any of the original meaning into a vernacular different from that of the original selection. While this can be a daunting task as Dr. Bohannon discovered in her encounter with the Tiv, it can be

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[66] Lareau, A. 2003. Unequal childhoods; Class, race, and family life. University of California Press.
[67] Banks, James A. (2001). Cultural diversity and education: Foundations, curriculum, and teaching. Needham Heights, MA. Allyn & Bacon.
Delpit, Lisa. (1995). Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom. New York, NY. The New Press.
Heath, Brice, S. (1983). Ways with words: Language, life and work in communities and classrooms. New York, NY. Cambridge University Press.

accomplished when the impetus is on the teaching of the ideas behind the words rather than the teaching of the canonical dialect.

Although learning the language of the prevailing culture holds significance for the ability to succeed economically, the ability to *understand the ideas* of the prevailing culture supersedes the ability to parrot its words. Being able to understand ideas may involve a process of relating concepts from a dissimilar culture to the students' own experiences which allows for greater comprehension and retention. I took Mrs. Jackson's point to heart when I began to develop The Sidewalk Scholar's method of instruction.

While The Sidewalk Scholar owes a debt of gratitude for their generosity in the sharing of start- up learning resources and guidance to The Black Star Project, a program which provides community-based education through cost-free instruction, tutoring and mentoring services to many Chicago area youth, our teaching methodology differs from their more traditional educational system approach, in which teachers talk, and students listen. The Sidewalk Scholar's Chicago-based program was established in order to address decreased youth literacy issues within Chicago's urban, at-risk neighborhoods by employing an alternative, interactive learning approach in which students talk and teachers listen. Despite differences in our pedagogic methods, The Sidewalk Scholar continues to enjoy a valuable partnership with programs such as The Black Star Project.

There are many independent programs which endeavor to address educational needs by providing services and learning resources to individuals and or groups. Numbers of them provide great benefits to their users through their laudable efforts to augment intellectual development and thereby contribute essential elements toward the promotion of good civic society.

Programs such as The Great Books Jr. provide valuable learning resources in the form of its Great Books volumes. The series includes "Great Works" from among the annals of canonical literature and while the literature contained provides useful knowledge as it relates to a traditional, educational / academic understanding, much of the esoteric terms contained within are an antithetical starting point in successfully addressing our program participants' initial academic interests and literacy levels, and oftentimes lack content essential toward the bridging of cultural misunderstandings. Also at issue is the rising cost of their learning materials which tends to exceed the economic capability of many of our program participants to purchase the volumes.

In contrast, The Khan Academy stands as a progressive, web-based entity which hosts a more empirically-based curriculum, (they've recently added humanities to their curriculum). Although the Khan Academy is not-for-profit and its educational content may be immensely useful to many, their services are oriented toward a demographic which likely enjoys access to a traditional educational system which positions their end users at an academic level that results from well funded educational systems and that differs significantly from the lower academic levels of demographics which endure educational systems which are often saddled with debt. This academic disconnect may comprise a "bridge too far" for some economically underserved, academically challenged, students.

Within these two seemingly extreme examples of independent literacy / educational programs, The Sidewalk Scholar's position may be best described as a hybrid. While we include canonical literature as a basis in portions of our curricula, this material is presented in the form of contemporized, interpretive essays rather than in the

standard formats. Our program actively employs electronic media and we encourage the use of the internet as a learning aid; however, our philosophy regarding the importance of interpersonal relationships drives our practice of face-to-face interaction.

All programs which endeavor to increase literacy and other forms of knowledge and in their wake, improve critical reasoning and writing skills, may have a positive impact toward the mitigation of unemployment, underemployment and the higher crime rates which customarily accompany those conditions. The negative effects of literacy deficiency are wide ranging; lessening scores on standardized tests aside, the inability to garner higher education, to obtain adequate employment and or to accomplish economic success all may connect to heightened crime rates and other detrimental components which may jeopardize the welfare of the individuals concerned as well as the welfare of society in general.

While distinctions between The Sidewalk Scholar's Chicago and South Bend programs include differing age and ethnic demographics, the previously discussed pedagogic techniques we employ are shared. Our program's hybrid – type composition allows us the flexibility to "code – switch" our program's structure thus, allowing The Sidewalk Scholar to be retrofitted for varied groups and community environments. While our Chicago program continues to service many older adolescents who have voluntarily left or have been involuntarily expelled from the traditional school setting, in the fall of 2011, the South Bend Saturday school program was attended by 20-25 school-aged youth who received reading and writing assistance through our eight week curriculum.

Among our regularly practiced learning methods is "active involvement in a story". In this method, the instructor and participants of respective ability groups read a

story aloud. (Instructors guide the reading of participants.) To ensure involvement, the instructor then asks students to recall the story in their own words and the instructor writes the students' respective interpretations of the story on large sheets of paper mounted on mobile easels. As students dictate their portions of the story, the instructor elicits their help in putting it into the correct order. The interpretation is then revealed by the students as a group activity and is subsequently published on the website. The entire group receives recognition to ensure that all students involved experience a sense of accomplishment. The stated objective in this method is, "No child is left out."

Additionally, youth select individual books which they read and are then tasked to write "independent" reports about what they believe the story means. While The Sidewalk Scholar Chicago eschews formalized assessments in lieu of a focus on literacy involvement that is oriented toward persuading participants to return to traditional educational programs, the South Bend program avails itself heavily of methods to ensure adherence to state standards for its school – aged participants. Our Chicago successes are determined by the percentages of returning participants to Sidewalk Scholar weekly programs and by the numbers of those participants who ultimately re - enter traditional school settings.

Currently, 32 percent of the Chicago program participants have returned to traditional educational programs in the three years since The Sidewalk Scholar's inception and 80 percent of participants return for our weekly programs. Our quantitative reading assessments taken at the close of the eight - week South Bend session contrasted with those taken at the onset, indicating that program participants experienced significant development in the areas of identification of context clues, making predictions, genre

identification, and main idea summarization. Parental questionnaires indicated overwhelming satisfaction, and the South Bend program has experienced a 100 percent re-registration rate, a curriculum expansion and currently stands wait- listed.

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APPENDIX
Saturday School Volunteer Application

Contact Information

Name	
Address	
City, State, ZIP	
Home / Cell Phone	
E-mail address	

Availability

During which hours are you available for volunteer assignments?

Weekday mornings ☐ Weekday evenings ☐

Weekend mornings ☐ Weekend afternoons ☐

Interests

Tell us in which areas you are interested in volunteering

___ Recruitment ___ Educating ___ Administration

Special Skills or Qualifications

Summarize special skills and qualifications you have acquired through employment, previous volunteer work, or other activities including hobbies and sports.

_____

_____

_____

Previous Volunteer Experience

_____

_____

_____

Person to Notify in case of Emergency

Name	
Relationship to You	
Address	
City, State, ZIP	
Home / Cell Phone	
E-mail address	

Name (print) _____

Signature _____

Date _____

It is the policy of this organization to provide equal opportunity without regard to age, color, disability, gender, race, religion, national origin, or sexual preference.

Thank you for completing this application and for your interest in volunteering with The Sidewalk Scholar.

The Sidewalk Scholar
Volunteer
Handbook

Assessment Day

All volunteers should arrive 15-20 minutes early to assist with student sign in. **All parents / guardians must fill out a registration form for their student or the student will be unable to participate in the program.** The assessment day should be used to get to know the students; not only their academic abilities, but their hobbies and preferences. This knowledge is critical in engaging students. Request that parents volunteer to be parent - liaisons to help communicate with the other parents about upcoming events. Help manage the registration process. Make sure all the children are safe and that the space is set up in a manner conducive to learning. Greet parents when they come in. Direct children to their seats after they sign in. Take note of any discipline problems and help to diffuse them when they arise.

During the Reading Assessment

Instructors: Split up into groups (even if it's one volunteer to every one student) and choose an ability-appropriate story for the students to read aloud to you. This guided reading session should be very casual and low-pressure. Provide relevant information based on your or their experience to help enrich the reading.

One Instructor should assess students individually. Ask the student to read a short ability-appropriate story and then follow up with questions about the story. Utilize the student assessment rubric to record the students' skill set.

Support Staff: Sit with the students, engage them individually or in small groups, and support the Instructor however you can. Ask comprehension questions and engage the students in activities. Provide relevant information based on your experience to help enrich the material.

During the Reading Session

Instructors: Spilt into equal groups based on the numbers of volunteers available and according to the skill set (from the assessment). For example, if you have 25 students and 7 volunteers split students into groups of 3 or 4 and assign one volunteer for each group. A portion of the reading time (at least 20 minutes) should be spent with students reading out loud. Be prepared to have to help students with phonics. Provide clues to help them figure out the word and its meaning. For students comfortable with decoding words, spend about 50% of the time in guided reading and the other 50% working on comprehension and discussion. Use interactive activities such as acting or drawing to help engage the students.

Parent Volunteers: Parents may help wherever needed. Ask parents to reinforce Saturday School lessons at home. Ask parents to fill in as support staff as needed.

Volunteer guidelines

Attire: Dress as if you want to convey authority and professionalism to the students without being condescending. Wear something comfortable, but still nice and presentable.

Students addressing Instructors: Set ground rules for what the students should call you based on what you are comfortable with (I.e. Ms. Smith or Instructor Smith).

Instructors addressing Students: Always address students respectfully.
General: These guidelines are simply that-guidelines. Situations and circumstances are always different. Act in the best interest of the children and yourself.

Step 1: Decide How to Group Your Students

There are two ways you can create groups:

1. Assemble students with similar needs: or
2. Gather children with varying abilities for peer support

Regardless of the grouping style utilized, be sure to keep your groups flexible and vary the arrangement—try to avoid grouping the same children together for all sessions. Small groups (6 or less) provide your students with the opportunity to work with different classmates and personalities.

While the groups are working, use ongoing assessments and observations to evaluate children's placement. After the session is over, ask groups to assess how successful they thought they were:

Have them describe what member actions are helpful and not helpful.

Have them make decisions about what behaviors to continue or change.

Step 2: Establish Rules and Expectations

During the first few weeks of implementation, work with your students to establish the **ground rules for working within a group**. Rules may include:

Speaking quietly within your group so as not to disturb others

Taking turns speaking, listening, and using materials

Leaving work areas clean and neat

Be sure to **encourage equal participation within a group**- if you have a child who tends to dominate a group, it may be helpful to have that student be in charge of making sure that each child in the group has a chance to participate.

Remind children to be on their best behavior and to be respectful of others. If a problem arises, encourage the group to try to work it out on their own before stepping in. If the noise level begins to rise, you may wish to establish a class signal, such as a bell or whistle, to remind children to lower volume.

Step: 3 Create Guidelines for Assistance

Establish proper ways of asking for and providing assistance. One way to achieve this is to have students role-play. A few scenarios to consider include:

How and when to request help from an instructor, volunteer, or other children

How to respectfully interrupt someone and gracefully accept help

How to politely provide help to other classmates using words and behaviors

How to show appreciation by complimenting efforts, not just achievements

How to assist with problem solving by discussing issues with others and accepting others' ideas as possible solutions

The Sidewalk Scholar Registration Form

Date: _____

1. Name of Student_____
   D.O.B._____
2. Name of School_____ Grade Level_____
3. Name of Parent / Guardian_____
4. Full Address_____

   Phone_____
5. Email address_____
6. Emergency Contacts:

   Name_____
   Relationship_____

   Address_____
   Phone_____

   Name_____
   Relationship_____

   Address_____
   Phone_____
7. Person(s) authorized to pick up child from the Saturday School (please make sure you answer this question carefully because if the name is not written on this registration form, whomever comes to pick up your child will be unable to do so if their name is not listed).
   1._____
   2._____
   3._____
8. I give permission for my child _____ to participate in all Saturday School activities.
9. Parent / Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

THE SIDEWALK SCHOLAR
STUDENT HEALTH INFORMATION

Date: _____

1. Name of Student_____
   D.O.B._____

2. Parent / Guardian_____

3. Address_____

   Phone_____

4. Email
   address_____

5. Emergency Contacts:
   Name_____
   Relationship_____
   Address_____
   Phone_____

   Name_____
   Relationship_____
   Address_____
   Phone_____

6. Is your child currently taking any medication? _____ yes _____ no

   If so, what is / are the name(s) of the medication(s)

   _____

   _____

   How often is medication taken? _____

   Does your child have any food or medical allergies? _____ yes _____ no

   If so, what are they?

   _____

   _____

RELEASE OF INFORMATION / LIKENESS

I hereby grant The Sidewalk Scholar permission to release any stated medical information included on this form to emergency personnel in the event it should become necessary. I hereby grant permission to use my child's likeness in a photograph in any and all of its publications, including website entries, without payment or any other consideration. I understand and agree that these materials will become the property of The Sidewalk Scholar, Inc.

Parent / Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN SATISFACTION FORM

HOW DO YOU FEEL YOUR CHILD HAS BENEFITTED FROM THE PROGRAM?

DO YOU PLAN TO RETURN YOUR CHILD/CHILDREN TO THE PROGRAM?

HAS THERE BEEN A PARTICULAR ASPECT OF THE PROGRAM THAT YOUR CHILD/CHILDREN HAS SPOKEN OF?

WOULD YOU RECOMMEND THE SIDEWALK SCHOLAR SATURDAY PROGRAM TO OTHER PARENTS?

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, COMMENTS OR CONCERNS THAT YOU THINK WILL HELP US TO IMPROVE OUR PROGRAM, PLEASE LET US KNOW.

Thank you for your participation!

Brenda Lucas
52218 Lookout Pointe Ct
Granger, IN 46530
773.615.9429
thescholar@thesidewalkscholar.org

Education

JD	The John Marshall Law School, 2015
MLS	Indiana University 2012
BA	Political Science / Theory Highest Distinction and Honors Purdue University 2010

Professional Experience

Founder, Director, The Sidewalk Scholar 2009-

Founder, CEO Network Resource Services 1999 – 2006

Intelligence Analyst United States Army 1994 - 1999
(Balkans / Eastern European Analytical Control Element)

Tutor/Mentor, The Black Star Project 2008-

Instructor, United States Army 1997-1999

Publications

Aristotelian Politics: Does The Patriot Act Negate Civic Virtue? Critique Worldwide Journal of Politics, 2009 http://lilt.ilstu.edu/critique/Spring%202009.htm

What Constitutes Good Judgment? Breyer's Liberty in Action vs. Scalia's Interpretive Matters. Clement S. Stacy Research Conference, Proceedings 2009, Volume I. *Also presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association 67th Annual National Conference, Palmer House Hilton, Chicago, IL*, Apr 02, 2009

Acknowledgment: *Justice Kennedy's Jurisprudence: The Full and Necessary Meaning of Liberty*. Frank J. Colucci. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009

Conferences
Midwestern Graduate Liberal Studies Conference 2012
Midwestern Graduate Liberal Studies Conference 2011
Midwest Political Science Association 2011
Midwest Political Science Association 2010
Northeastern Political Science Association Conference 2009
Ronald E. McNair National Conference 2009
Illinois State University Political Science Conference 2009
Midwest Political Science Association 2009
Clement S. Stacy Undergraduate Research Conference 2009
Ronald E. McNair Summer Research Conference 2009

Research Grants
Ronald E. McNair Research Grant 2010
Purdue University Research and Professional Development LSAMP 2009

Continuing Research
Measuring Effects of Supreme Court Rulings: Affirmative Action After Grutter, Fall 2012
Heideggerian Perspectives in the EU: Falsch oder Unglaublich? Fall 2012
The Sidewalk Scholar: Academia in the Public Sphere, Fall 2012

Professional Affiliations
Member, Rotary International
President (Emeritus) Pi Sigma Alpha, Tau Psi Chapter
Member, Phi Alpha Theta
Member, American Political Science Association
Member, Midwest Political Science Association
Member, Academy of Political Science
Member, American Constitution Society
Member, American Historical Association